

**APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
PROTECTING A COMPUTER SYSTEM**

ABSTRACT

There is disclosed an apparatus and method for protecting
5 a computer system by providing an improved password to prevent
unauthorized access to the computer system. The apparatus of
the present invention generally comprises a password controller
capable of comparing a received password attempt with a stored
password. The stored password of the present invention comprises
a time envelope that comprises at least one password segment
comprising: 1) an entry event; 2) a predetermined time interval
following the entry event; and 3) a terminating signal to mark
the end of the password segment. Access to the computer system
is authorized when password segments of a password attempt match
the corresponding password segments of the stored password.
The stored password of the present invention generally comprises
groups of computer readable characters separated by time
intervals of variable length. A time delay is added to each
response to a password attempt in order to conceal the length of
20 the time intervals within the stored password.